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International Public Opinion.

The Kishineff massacre and the attempted petition of Jewish leaders and others in this country to the Russian government have brought to the front the whole question of international public opinion, its rights, duties and limitations, as has rarely been the case.

The existence and rapid growth of an international public opinion, with a corresponding evolution of international conscience, is one of the most patent facts of the day. The time has passed when any nation can live to itself. All governments and peoples now walk in the white light of universal observation and judgment. Concealment is no longer possible. Severe passport regulations and censorships count for little. What is said in secret is uttered on the housetops. In all parts of the world men learn quickly of the important occurrences in other quarters, and then think and speak and write about them with the utmost sincerity and freedom, often with a great deal more frankness and fairness than of nearby events.

This freedom of discussion of foreign affairs is not a mere accidental result of the new and swift methods of intercommunication. These merely furnish the occasion for its exercise. It is a natural social right of

human nature. It is also a solemn duty. The interests of particular nations and of humanity demand it. There is nothing much worse for a nation than to live under its own eyes alone.

Governments also have a right to consider and pass judgment upon the actions and policies of other governments, though of course the exercise of the right is a most delicate task, and meddlesomeness in the affairs of other governments is never justified. International law already recognizes this right in extreme cases of disorder and wrong doing. How far, if at all, it may be expedient to use the right under particular circumstances, how it should be done, and under what limitations, may very properly be open to question. But of the right and the duty, speaking in general terms, there can be no doubt.

The Jewish leaders and others in this country who have sought by appeal to the Russian government to secure more favorable treatment of the Jews in the Czar's dominions have been entirely within their right. The circumstances amply justified them in what they did. The attempt of our government to aid these petitioners in a matter of so grave character has also been entirely proper. The government — the President and Congress — would have been fully warranted in sending a memorial on its own motion, if its own skirts had been sufficiently spotless at home.

Russia has declined to receive the petition, though its moral effect has probably not been on that account in any way diminished. Not only the authorities at St. Petersburg, but every persecuted Hebrew and every sufferer from whatever injustice in Russia, will learn of the voice in behalf of justice that came out of the West. And von Plehve, or whoever was responsible for permitting the massacre, cannot prevent it. The only ground on which the Czar's government can justify itself in refusing the remonstrance is that it was in no way responsible for the crime, and that it is doing everything in its power to bring the perpetrators to judgment. This justification is offered, and we sincerely hope it may be made good, though the evidence accumulates that at least the Minister of the Interior was as guilty in the affair as the governor of Bessarabia, whom the Czar summarily dismissed.

The tendency on the part of both peoples and governments to resent the exercise of this right of foreign intervention of opinion grows out of the old national exclusiveness of the days when nations knew little

of one another. But it must give way before the growing unity of the peoples of the world and of their interests, which makes wrong in one part of the world a wrong against all men everywhere. Nothing is more certain than that we are to have hereafter an international public opinion as powerful in world affairs as is local public opinion in the affairs of communities and states. The world-protests against the great national sins of the past five years put this beyond question. A world-conscience is now a fact. Injustice in one part of the earth is felt all round the globe, and in measure everywhere condemned. Every nation, every government, now lives under the sharp eye of this world-conscience, which is often all the more true in its criticisms the farther away from home are the objects of its judgments. Intelligent and fair-minded foreigners are capable often of passing a more just judgment upon the deeds of a government or a people than are the citizens at home, blinded so often by their self-interests and their pride.

It has been objected to the severe arraignment in this country of the Russian authorities in connection with the Kishineff massacre that our mouths are justly stopped by reason of the numerous and cruel lynchings which have taken place among us, and which as yet we have not devised means to prevent. There is point in this criticism, to the extent to which the people, the national, state or local authorities have connived at the ghastly deeds of American mobs. But the crime of lynching, which we are glad to say finds comparatively little condonement among us, ought not to stop the mouths of that large portion of our people and government authorities who denounce mob violence and do what they can to prevent it.

Those who love justice and human rights and are faithful to their high demands have the right and the duty to condemn and seek to remedy wrong everywhere, in other countries as well as their own. The lovers of justice in Russia, of whom there are many, who oppose the oppressions of the oligarchy and the wrongs done by the populace or the authorities, are perfectly justified in condemning the crime of lynching in this country and in severely arraigning us — high professors — for not finding means to prevent it. They ought to do it even more strongly than they do. We are not, of course, talking about the return of railing for railing, of reviling for reviling, of which there is, sad to say, too much everywhere. People who indulge in this are enemies of all countries, their own included.

The growing society of the good, of the just and humane, in all countries, ought to see that no acts, that no policy of inhumanity anywhere escapes their knowledge and condemnation. Discrimination, of course, they should show. They should praise where praise is due, abroad as at home. They should as far as possible pull every "beam" out of their

country's eye. But they should be equally faithful in effort to remove "beams" — real beams — out of the eyes of other peoples. Right and justice, wrong and injustice, are the same everywhere. All men are brethren, members of one family. When one of them — even the least of them — suffers anywhere under the mildest or the darkest tyranny, he should be at once made sensible of the sympathy and fellowship of all, of whatever name or tongue, who live in the spirit of justice and brotherly love. If injustice is to perish from the earth, it must be spared and condoned nowhere. National boundaries must not be allowed to shield it.

Russia and Japan.

One of the leading New York dailies recently remarked that it is a disgrace to the beginning of the twentieth century that such a "miserable muddle" as that into which Russia and Japan have gotten themselves should be still possible.

That is very true. There has not been a war or a serious international conflict in recent years that was not a disgrace to civilization; and the farther along the years go the greater will be the disgrace of any international misunderstanding which brings bitterness and threat of war. There is no dispute now possible between honorable nations that cannot be quickly resolved by reason, if there be a fair amount of patience and considerateness.

The present danger of war in the Far East — for the nervous movements of the past month in both countries show the danger to be real — has grown out of the past in a perfectly natural way. The causes have been Russian aggression and interference on the one hand and on the other Japanese national ambition and pride, which have manifested themselves strongly since the war with China eight years ago. That war has created in Japan an aggressive military party, the members of which unquestionably long for war with some first-class power in order that the nation's new military and naval strength may be displayed. This party does not hesitate to nag Russia, and is slow to credit any of her professed intentions to evacuate Manchuria. There is also in Japan general belief that Russia has ultimate designs on Korea, after she has got Manchuria safe in her clutches, and even upon Japan herself. Russia, on the other hand, proposes to continue her expansion eastward, in one way or another, and she fears that Japan, if her extraordinary development continues, will undertake by and by to dislodge her from Manchuria entirely.

Thus the two powers have been facing each other and hurrying preparations for war in a manner not at all reassuring. If the conditions above outlined continue, and definite steps for the assuring of peace are not speedily taken, war will be in time inevitable, even if avoided at the present time.